



United States  
Environmental Protection  
Agency

Office of Public Affairs  
77 West Jackson Blvd.  
Chicago, Illinois 60604

Illinois Indiana  
Michigan Minnesota  
Wisconsin Ohio

*This fact sheet will provide...*

- ✓ *A brief history of the site*
- ✓ *The status of soil excavation and removal activities*
- ✓ *A summary of residential soil sampling procedures*
- ✓ *An update on the evaluation of residential soil sampling results and health impacts*
- ✓ *An introduction to the new lead U.S. EPA On-Scene Coordinator*
- ✓ *List of agency contacts*

### **Introducing Rey Rivera On-Scene Coordinator**

Due to other project commitments, Reiniero (Rey) Rivera has replaced Sam Borries as the lead U.S. EPA On-Scene Coordinator. Rey, an environmental engineer with the Superfund Division, has been a part of the site clean-up team for a number of months.

Sam Borries will continue to provide advice and consult for the duration of the soil excavation and removal activities.

## **Former Northwestern Barrel Site Status of Site Activities**

**South Milwaukee, Wisconsin**

**October 1, 1998**

This fact sheet provides an update of soil excavation and removal activities at the Former Northwestern Barrel (Marina Cliffs) site in South Milwaukee. It also provides an update on laboratory findings of surface and subsurface soil samples collected from residential properties in late June and early July 1998.



U.S. EPA sign at the entrance to the site.

### **Site History and Background**

The Former Northwestern Barrel site is located along Lake Michigan between Marina Road and the South Milwaukee Wastewater Treatment Plant. The site is a former drum recycling facility which operated from 1941 to 1964. While in business, operators disposed of wastes from drum cleaning operations in two pits on the south eastern side of the property. Spills and disposal activities also affected the ravine to the north, lake bluff to the east, and upland areas. After the facility closed in the 1960s, developers built condominiums on the western portion of the former barrel factory property. Site soils are contaminated with volatile organic compounds, metals, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and lead.

In response to complaints from the public, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (Wisconsin DNR) investigated the site. In 1990, the property owner, Towne Realty, removed some of the contaminated soil and drum fragments. In 1994, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) conducted a site assessment and ordered numerous companies suspected of sending drums to the site to conduct a cleanup. In late 1996, companies complying with the order excavated

waste materials from two disposal pits and stockpiled the waste on a constructed staging pad. This material was treated and disposed of off-site in the summer of 1997.



Excavation of soil beneath a former pit.

### Soil Excavation and Removal Activities

Beginning on July 15, 1998, new activities began in the area enclosed by the site fence. The following activities have been completed or are on-going:

- clearing, grubbing, and shredding of trees and vegetation on the southern bank of the ravine and most of the upland area;
- construction of temporary roads into the ravine and lake bluff;
- installation and maintenance of sediment retention dams and silt curtains to control erosion during soil excavation;
- delineation of site wetland areas;
- excavation, stockpiling, sampling and off-site disposal of contaminated soils from ravine and upland areas;
- direct loading onto trucks and off-site disposal of soils from beneath two former disposal pits on the southeastern side of the site;
- excavation of the former building foundation on the west side of the site;
- air monitoring at the fence line for vapors and dust;
- chemical-specific air monitoring during soil excavation and removal activities.

Soil excavation and removal activities inside the fence are on schedule and are expected to be completed by December, 1998. Some neighbors have complained about odors or dust; however, test results show levels are well within acceptable limits established by the Wisconsin DNR for the protection of human health and environment. Although there have been noticeable odors on some days, residents should be aware that some people are able to smell odors at levels that are believed to be safe.

### Residential Soil Sampling

Connestoga-Rovers & Associates (CRA), a contractor for the cooperating potentially responsible parties, collected surface and subsurface soil samples from two residential properties surrounding the site. The purpose of this sampling was 1) to address concerns voiced by area residents, 2) to further investigate the chemicals found previously in one borehole, and 3) to give the U.S. EPA the necessary information to determine if additional clean-up activities are necessary.

**Marina Cliffs Condominium Property:** A total of 11 boreholes were drilled and 36 subsurface soil samples were collected.

**City of South Milwaukee Property:** One borehole was drilled and four subsurface soil samples were collected from property owned by the City of South Milwaukee. This narrow strip of property is located just south of the site fence near the Lake Ridge Apartments. A surface soil sample was also collected in this area.

All work was completed under the oversight of the U.S. EPA and the Wisconsin DNR.

In addition to the samples collected by CRA, the U.S. EPA's contractor, Ecology & Environment, Inc., collected eight split samples from a portion of the samples.

For information about the chemicals analyzed and procedures used, please consult the site information repository at the South Milwaukee Public Library.



### Laboratory Results

**Marina Cliffs Condominium Property:** Sample results show that the chemicals found in 5 of 11 boreholes are typical of residential city environments. The chemicals found in other boreholes are similar to levels found earlier by CRA in borehole

BH-5. The results from the new samples and from BH-5 showed chemicals elevated above levels typically found in residential city environments. The samples that contained the highest levels were more than two feet below the surface and were usually found six to twelve feet down.

**City of South Milwaukee Property:** The results of the surface and subsurface samples are typical of residential city environments. A folder containing copies of letters and a fact sheet from CRA to property owners has been placed in the site information repository at the South Milwaukee Public Library. A complete set of results will be placed in the repository soon.

## Impacts to Health

The U.S. EPA, the Wisconsin DNR, and the Wisconsin Division of Health have recently received the results of CRA's residential soil sampling and have conducted a preliminary review. Although levels of chemicals are above levels typically found in residential city environments, **the results do not indicate that there are any levels that would pose an immediate health hazard.** Over the next several weeks, the agencies will be evaluating the results to see if any long term threats to health exist. The Wisconsin Division of Health will prepare a health report and distribute it to interested residents. In addition, the U.S. EPA will mail a fact sheet summarizing this evaluation when it is complete.

### Site Information Repository

To review site-related files, visit the site information repository :

**South Milwaukee Public Library  
Reference Desk  
1907 10th Avenue  
South Milwaukee, WI 53172**



Chemical-specific air monitoring station.

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## For Additional Information

If you would like additional information about the Former Northwestern Barrel site, please contact the individuals listed below or visit the site information repository at the South Milwaukee Public Library.

### *Cleanup:*

#### **Bri Bill**

Community Involvement Coordinator  
U.S. EPA  
Office of Public Affairs (P-19J)  
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(312) 353-6646 or 1-800-621-8431

#### **Rey Rivera**

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#### **Andy Boettcher**

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WDNR  
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### *Health:*

#### **Henry Nehls-Lowe**

Epidemiologist  
Department of Health and Family Services  
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Madison, WI 53703  
(608) 266-3479

#### **Clayton Koher**

Regional Representative  
ATSDR  
77 West Jackson Blvd. (ATSDR-4J)  
Chicago, IL 60604  
(312) 886-0840

#### **Jackie Ove**

Public Health Administrator  
South Milwaukee Health Dept.  
2424 15th Avenue  
South Milwaukee, WI 53172  
(414) 764-5060

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**To report complaints or to discuss site issues with a U.S. EPA representative, please continue to contact:**

**U.S. EPA site trailer at (414) 571-1212**

**or**



**Bri Bill, Community Involvement Coordinator at:**

**1-800-621-8431**



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